metro

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Monday, February 13, 2017 metro.us | t: MetroPhilly | f: MetroPhilly

GRAMMY FASHION

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The 'do-over' is overdone in Trump's America. 6

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RIGGED?

An inside look at how easy (and difficult) it is to fix pro sports games in America. 4

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WHITE HOUSE OFFICIAL ATTACKS COURT

1 A White House official attacked a U.S. court ruling that blocked President Donald Trump's executive order on immigration as a "judicial usurpation of power" and said the administration was considering a range of options, including a new order. Sustained criticism of the judiciary from the White House comes amid concern among Democrats and legal scholars over Trump's view of the constitutional principle of judicial independence as the administration seeks to overcome legal setbacks to its travel ban issued on Jan. 27. It has also become the backdrop against which U.S. senators consider Trump's Supreme Court nominee, Judge Neil Gorsuch, for a lifetime appointment to the nation's highest court. REUTERS

MEXICANS VENT OVER TRUMP, OWN PRESIDENT

2 Thousands of protesters in more than a dozen Mexican cities took to the streets on Sunday to express their fierce opposition to U.S. President Donald Trump, portraying the new leader as a menace to both America and Mexico. Waving Mexicans flags and hoisting anti-Trump signs in both Spanish and English, some vulgar, many protesters also heaped scorn on their own president, deriding Enrique Pena Nieto as a weak leader who has presided over rampant corruption and violence at home. Trump and Pena Nieto have been locked in battle over their countries' deep ties for months, even before Trump won the presidency with promises to get tougher on immigration and trade from Mexico. Mexico fears Trump's policies could send Latin America's second biggest economy into crisis. REUTERS

STEINMEIER ELECTED GERMAN PRESIDENT

3 Former foreign minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier was elected Germany's president on Sunday, the 12th person to hold the largely ceremonial post in the post-war era. Steinmeier, a Social Democrat who had served as foreign minister until last month, won 931 of the 1,239 valid votes by lawmakers and representatives of Germany's 16 federal states. There 103 abstentions and 14 votes were invalid. After Bundestag president Norbert Lammert announced the results, all representatives held a standing ovation except for a few dozen members of the populist Alternative for Germany (AfD) party. REUTERS

PENN AT THE PALESTRA

5 Max Rothschild of Penn goes up for a dunk as Wil Bathurst of Cornell takes a swipe during the first half at The Palestra on Sunday. The Quakers won, 82-63.

GETTY IMAGES

JAZZ AND R&B SINGER AL JARREAU DIES AT 76

4 Jazz and R&B singer Al Jarreau, whose hits included "We're in This Love Together" and "Moonlighting," died on Sunday in Los Angeles at age 76. His Facebook page said Jarreau "passed away this morning, at about 6 a.m. LA time. He was in the hospital, kept comfortable by his wife, son, and a few of his family and friends." No cause of death was given. The seven-time Grammy winner had been hospitalized for exhaustion last week and was forced to cancel his remaining tour dates for 2017. Jarreau was considered one of jazz's greatest vocalists, with a mastery of scat singing and vocal percussion.

REUTERS

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RACHEL RACZKA, NATIONAL MUSIC EDITOR

Though you might have been on pins and needles about who would capture the Grammy for the Best New Age Album, everyone else was electrified by the competition between Beyonce and Adele, who faced off for the Album, Record and Song of the Year. And if you happened to have missed the star-studded event, you can find assorted Grammy items and such gems as a slideshow of the worst-dressed celebrities at **Metro.us**.

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The fix is in: How easy is it to rig sports in the United States in 2017?

The potential for scandal is great in the NHL and UFC.

MATT BURKE
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The New England Patriots' miraculous comeback to beat the Atlanta Falcons in Super Bowl LI last week was so incredible it was as if a higher power was pulling the strings.

Conspiracy theorists had a field day in the immediate aftermath of what will go down as one of, if not the greatest Super Bowl of all time. Those in the tinfoil hats pointed out that the Falcons hardly attempted to burn the clock late in the game, and that Fox — which broadcast the game — posted a graphic before New England won that read, "New England Patriots — wins Super Bowl with touchdown." (Likely just poor grammar from a production assistant).

The Super Bowl truthers also claim that James White's knee was down before he scored the game-winning TD, and the truly nutty believe President Donald Trump and even Russian President Vladimir Putin had their fingerprints on the game. After all, Trump is buddy-buddy with Patriots owner Robert Kraft, and both Trump and Kraft have a history with Putin (Putin once stole one of Kraft's Super Bowl rings, so last week's win was reimbursement).

As fun as those theories are, football is likely the most difficult game in all of American pro sports to rig.

New York Rangers goaltender Henrik Lundqvist GETTY IMAGES

Metro recently spoke with Joe Gagliano, author of the new book "No Grey Areas," about how difficult it would be to rig a pro football game and how easy (or hard) it would be to fix other major sports in the U.S.. Gagliano financed, orchestrated and was later indicted for his role in one of the most prominent point-shaving scandals in U.S. history in the Arizona State basketball case of the 1990s.

Football

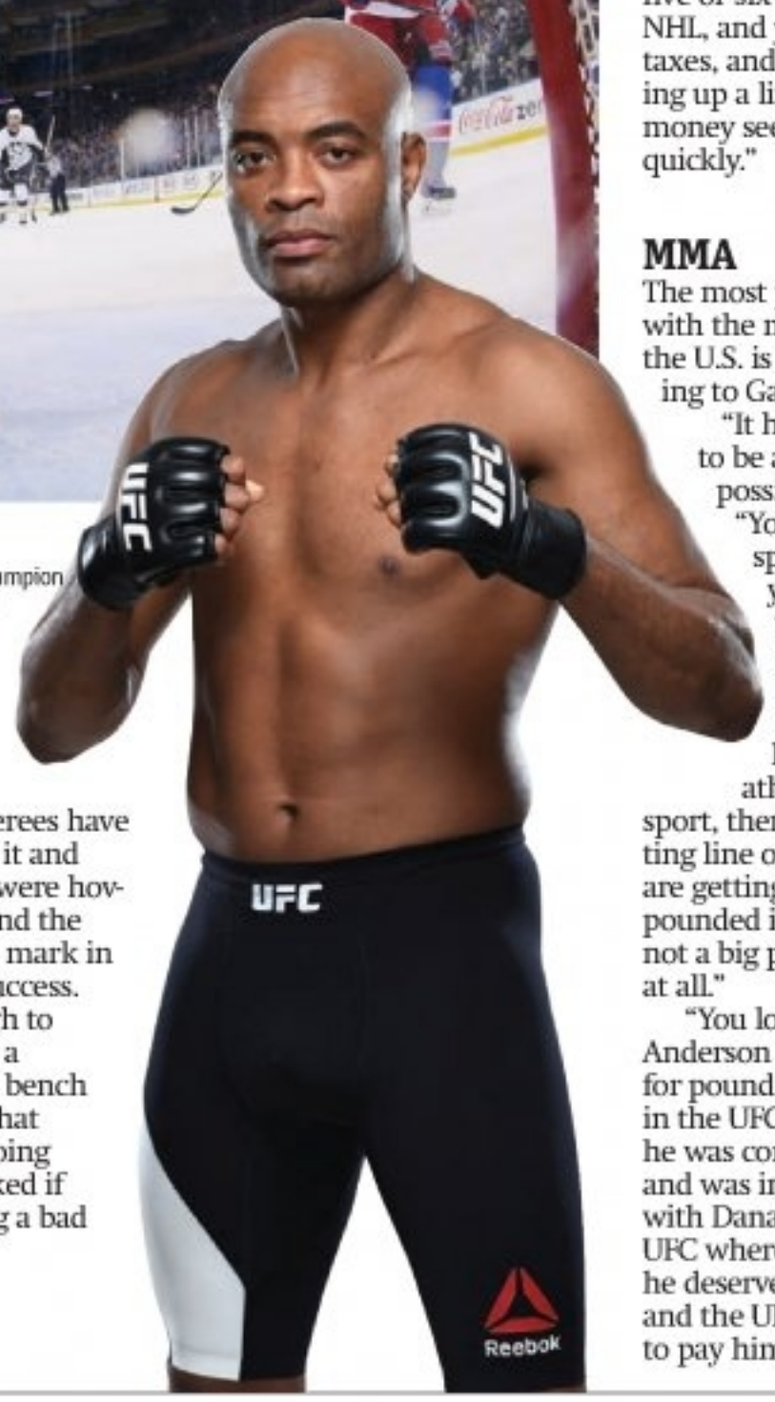
As much as Patriots haters would like it to not be the case, Gagliano believes the Super Bowl was on the up and up.

"In football, you've got 11 guys on the field," Gagliano told Metro. "Even if you had a quarterback in your pocket it'd be next to impossible, and you're just not going to get an NFL quarterback because they're just so highly compensated. There's just no way to motivate a quarterback to fix a game because they're already making so much money."

Basketball

Gagliano's cash cow was basketball, but he says it has become increasingly difficult over the years to rig what occurs on the court.

"In the NBA it's next to impossible today as well," he said. "A couple referees have tried to do it and even they were hovering around the 70 percent mark in terms of success. It's so tough to do it. Even a lower-paid bench player — that player is going to get yanked if he's having a bad night."



Former UFC champion Anderson Silva GETTY IMAGES

Hockey

Team sports are obviously much more difficult to fix than individual sports because of the number of parties that need to be involved, but Gagliano does believe that the NHL is susceptible to scandal.

"I think if you get a goalie in the twilight of his career it could be possible," he said. "These guys don't make a lot of money relative to the other sports. Even if you make $1 million a year, your career is typically only lasting five or six years in the NHL, and you're paying taxes, and you're building up a lifestyle — that money seems to go pretty quickly."

MMA

The most popular sport with the most red flags in the U.S. is MMA, according to Gagliano.

"It has the potential to be as corrupt as possible," he said. "You look at that sport as a whole, you look at these kids — not making a lot of money. You look at the lifespan of an athlete in that sport, then you put a betting line on it? These kids are getting their brains pounded in, and there's not a big payday there at all."

"You look at a guy like Anderson Silva — pound for pound the best fighter in the UFC for years. But he was constantly arguing and was in bitter battles with Dana White and the UFC where he thought he deserved more money and the UFC didn't want to pay him more money."

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SAFER HOUSING

Crime down more than 40 percent at public housing complexes, agency says

The Philadelphia Housing Authority announced that reports of crime in public housing projects fell by more than 41 percent last year, thanks primarily to the agency's deployment of a larger police force.

Thefts were down by 68 percent, sexual assaults by 78 percent and robberies were cut in half, the PHA reported Friday.

PHA President Kelvin Jeremiah credited the decrease to his expansion of the agency's police force after he took the reins at the department in 2013.

"The increase in the department and having a police department that works hand-in-hand with residents to create crime-free areas is definitely paying dividends," Jeremiah said in a statement.

Serious crime issues have been reported at some public housing projects around Philly. Before the Blumberg-Sharswood towers in North Philly were demolished, Jeremiah himself said his life was threatened by a drug dealer in the towers, leading in part to the decision to raze that project.

In October 2014, senior citizens living at Gladys P. Jacobs Manor at 11th Street and Fairmount Avenue blocked the streets to protest the announcement that they might lose their armed security guards.

Jeremiah "invested heavily in a closed circuit television (CCTV) security system and multilayered door entry access controls," the agency said in a news release. He also has so far recruited eight PHA residents to become PHA police officers.

PHA Police Chief Branville Bard said high visibility patrols and following residents' suggestions to concentrate patrols on site at housing developments, instead of broader areas around the projects, was helping. He also gave high marks to the residents who became PHA police.

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TRUMP'S AMERICA

IF AT FIRST YOU DON'T SUCCEED

President Trump and Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe hit the links Saturday in Florida. GETTY IMAGES

OPINION

ELLIS HENICAN
@henican

In government as in golf, it's never too soon for a mulligan.

I can't report how many do-overs Donald Trump took on the links in Palm Beach, Florida, with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. Mar-a-Lago security men taped black plastic over the windows to block the news media's view. But this much is clear for anyone to see: An ever-growing roster of Trump slogans and promises is now being speed-edited by reality.

The most glaring one: White House staffers are frantically redrafting the botched Muslim ban blocked by a three-judge panel of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. The "brand new order" could be ready as early as today. But that's just a warm-up.

The big question going forward is who or what Trump's next mulligan will be. The "repeal and replace" of Obamacare, now sounding more and more like a rebrand? The president's impetuous Two Chinas policy, hardly mentioned since one chummy postelection phone call with the president of Taiwan? Is one of these the next oh-never-mind?

Could it be the truth-challenged national security adviser, Gen. Michael Flynn, who first insisted he didn't talk sanctions with the Russian ambassador — and now pleads selective memory loss? Is Gen. Flynn tomorrow's mulligan?

When it comes to necessary redos, there are so many ripe possibilities. The increasingly pricey border wall, which Mexico still won't pay for? The claim that 3 million "illegals" voted in an election that Donald Trump won. Any evidence yet? The sweeping crackdown on illegal immigration that will apply to — wait, who will it apply to? Anyone here without papers? Only serious criminals? Muslims from some nations or from many?

Everything is open to reinterpretation except for this: When you have a president who speaks by tweet and governs by gut emotion, no view is forever and no decision can't be undone.

It was fascinating, I thought, to watch the reaction when North Korea leader Kim Jong Un sent a special bread-and-butter gift to Trump and Abe's golf-and-get-to-know-you weekend — a mid-range ballistic missile into the Sea of Japan. "It won't happen" gave way immediately to the mildest platitude: "The United States of America stands behind Japan, its great ally, 100 percent, thank you."

Anyone ready to call another mulligan?

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The city's Indego bike sharing program has been a beneficiary of state funding. GETTY IMAGES

BIKE FUNDING JEOPARDIZED BY SANCTUARY CITIES BILL

RANDY LOBASSO

The state Senate overwhelmingly approved a bill last week that would withhold state grant money from so-called sanctuary cities. It's a somewhat unprecedented, but totally predictable, move from a state legislature that's become openly hostile to its own economic and cultural hubs in recent years. If made into law, it could have a detrimental effect on, among other things, street infrastructure.

The Municipal Sanctuary and Federal Enforcement Act, or SAFE Act, would target Pennsylvania's "sanctuary cities," of which there are at least 19. The bill passed, 37-12, across party lines.

What sanctuary city means in real terms: The municipality does not cooperate with the federal government in prosecuting undocumented persons for violating immigration laws, and provides city services to all individuals regardless of immigration status.

Mayor Jim Kenney has already said he will not alter the city's sanctuary city status, despite the bill's passage. Philadelphia and other sanctuary cities have also been similarly threatened by the federal government.

In addition to the potential humanitarian crisis that could unfold, this bill could keep $638 million in state funding from the city. That's bad. And more than $12 million in yearly alternative transportation and trail infrastructure could also be stripped from the city if the SAFE Act is signed into law. Philadelphia's bicycling infrastructure is largely funded through state grants.

In 2016 alone, Philadelphia received more than $12 million for bicycle and pedestrian projects from the state.

This included the upcoming extension of the Schuylkill River Trail, from South Street to Christian Street; a Valley Green Road Pedestrian Trail in Northwest Philly; Philadelphia's Indego bike sharing program; a multimodal accessibility improvement project at Penn's Landing; the Mantua Greenway; improvements to MLK Jr. Drive; and plenty of others.

Of course, Philadelphia being the biggest city in the state and the largest economic center, these projects are largely funded by the people of this city, whose money is sent to the state and federal government, then sent back to us in the form of grants. Yay taxation!

It seems that the legislature is emboldened by President Trump, whose Muslim travel ban found families legally traveling to the U.S. detained for up to 19 hours in airports, and a 5-year-old handcuffed. Trump's press secretary later defended shackling the child, noting, "To assume that just because of someone's age and gender that they don't pose a threat would be misguided and wrong."

The good news? Although the bill will probably pass the House, Gov. Tom Wolf has said he has problems with the legislation. The potential law was also written in a vague manner, so it's not totally clear what it'd look like if made into law.

Either way, there's a lot on the line if the SAFE Act passes, and none of it looks too good for Philadelphia.

Randy LoBasso is communications director of the Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia.

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District Attorney Seth Williams takes the oath. ALL IMAGES CHARLES MOSTOLLER

DA Seth Williams announced on Friday that he will not seek re-election.

Facing 'shame' of financial scandals, DA says he won't seek third term

District Attorney Seth Williams was recently fined thousands of dollars for accepting gifts.

SAM NEWHOUSE
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Philadelphia District Attorney Seth Williams bowed to increasing pressure over his financial indiscretions by announcing on Friday that he will not seek re-election at the end of his current term.

"I have made regrettable mistakes in my personal life and personal financial life that cast a unnecessary shadow over the district attorney's office," Williams said at a Friday morning news conference.

Williams, Philadelphia's first African-American district attorney, plans to serve out the remainder of his term, which ends in January 2018.

Williams cited the "embarrassment, shame and adverse publicity" that followed investigations into his fundraising and failure to report financial gifts as reasons for his decision to not to run for a third term.

The DA said that a news conference he conducted Wednesday to announce his office's expansion of the Conviction Review Unit demonstrated that the scandals had become a distraction.

"The first five questions were about me receiving gifts. Not about safety, not about justice," he said. "The questions were about gifts."

He also said his two daughters have had to develop a "thick skin" as they "helplessly watch their father's character publicly attacked on a near-daily basis."

Just weeks ago, the Philadelphia Ethics Board fined Williams $62,000 for not disclosing 89 gifts and five sources of income, reportedly the largest fine in the board's history.

Williams allegedly received $160,050 in unreported gifts. He was also ordered to pay $2,840 for the value of the prohibited gifts he received.

Williams' campaign fundraising and nonprofit activities were reported by the Inquirer to be under federal probe.

Williams said he hoped he would leave the DA's office "a better place than I found it."

Multiple Democratic candidates have already kicked off campaigns for district attorney.

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North Korea tests ballistic missile; US to avoid escalation

The launch marks the first test of Trump's vow to get tough on an isolated North Korean regime.

North Korea fired a ballistic missile into the sea early on Sunday, the first such test since President Donald Trump was elected, and his administration indicated that Washington would have a calibrated response to avoid escalating tensions.

The test was likely to have been of an intermediate-range Musudan-class missile that landed in the Sea of Japan, according to South Korea's military, not an Intercontinental Ballistic Missile, which the North has said it could test at any time.

A U.S. official said the Trump administration had been expecting a North Korean "provocation" soon after taking office and will consider a full range of options in response, but they would be calibrated to show U.S. resolve while avoiding escalation.

Later, White House adviser Stephen Miller said on the television show "Fox News Sunday" that "we are going to reinforce and strengthen our vital alliances in the Pacific region as part of our strategy to deter and prevent the increasing hostility that we've seen in recent years from the North Korean regime."

The new administration is also likely to step up pressure on China to rein in North Korea, reflecting Trump's previously stated view that Beijing has not done enough on this front, the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"This was no surprise," the official said. "The North Korean leader likes to draw attention at times like this."

A man watches a news broadcast on North Korea's unidentified ballistic missile launch at Seoul Station in Seoul, South Korea. GETTY IMAGES

The latest test comes a day after Trump held a summit meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, and also follows Trump's phone call last week with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

"I just want everybody to understand, and fully know, that the United States of America is behind Japan, our great ally, 100 percent," Trump told reporters in Palm Beach, Florida, speaking alongside Abe. He made no further comments.

Abe called the launch "absolutely intolerable" and said North Korea must comply with U.N. Security Council resolutions.

NATO condemned the missile test in a statement by Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, who said North Korea "must refrain from further provocations, halt all launches using ballistic missile technology and abandon once and for all its ballistic missile programs …"

The French foreign ministry also condemned the launch, issuing a statement that said "France reaffirms its solidarity with its partners in Asia-Pacific whose security is threatened by the North Korean nuclear and ballistic program."

China is North Korea's main ally but has been frustrated by Pyongyang's repeated provocations, although it bristles at pressure from Washington and Seoul to curb the North and its young leader, Kim Jong Un.

China's foreign ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Trump and his aides are likely to weigh a series of possible responses, including new U.S. sanctions to tighten financial controls, an increase in naval and air assets in and around the Korean peninsula and accelerated installation of new missile defense systems in South Korea, the administration official said. REUTERS

CORRUPTION

Israel says will not allow former Peru President Toledo to enter

Israel said on Sunday it would not allow in former Peruvian President Alejandro Toledo, who is wanted in connection with a corruption probe, before his affairs were settled in Peru.

Peru had been informed by U.S. authorities on Saturday that they were not planning to keep Toledo from boarding a flight to Israel from California that was scheduled to land in Tel Aviv on Sunday.

"Former Peru President Toledo will be allowed into Israel only when his matters are settled in Peru," an Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman said, without elaborating.

It was unclear whether Toledo had boarded the flight to Israel, which does not have an extradition treaty with Peru.

A judge in Peru issued an international arrest warrant for Toledo on Thursday, and the government offered a $30,000 reward for any information leading to his capture after he failed to turn himself in to authorities.

Peru has said Interpol issued a red alert to 190 member countries to help find him, but Toledo does not appear on its list of wanted persons.

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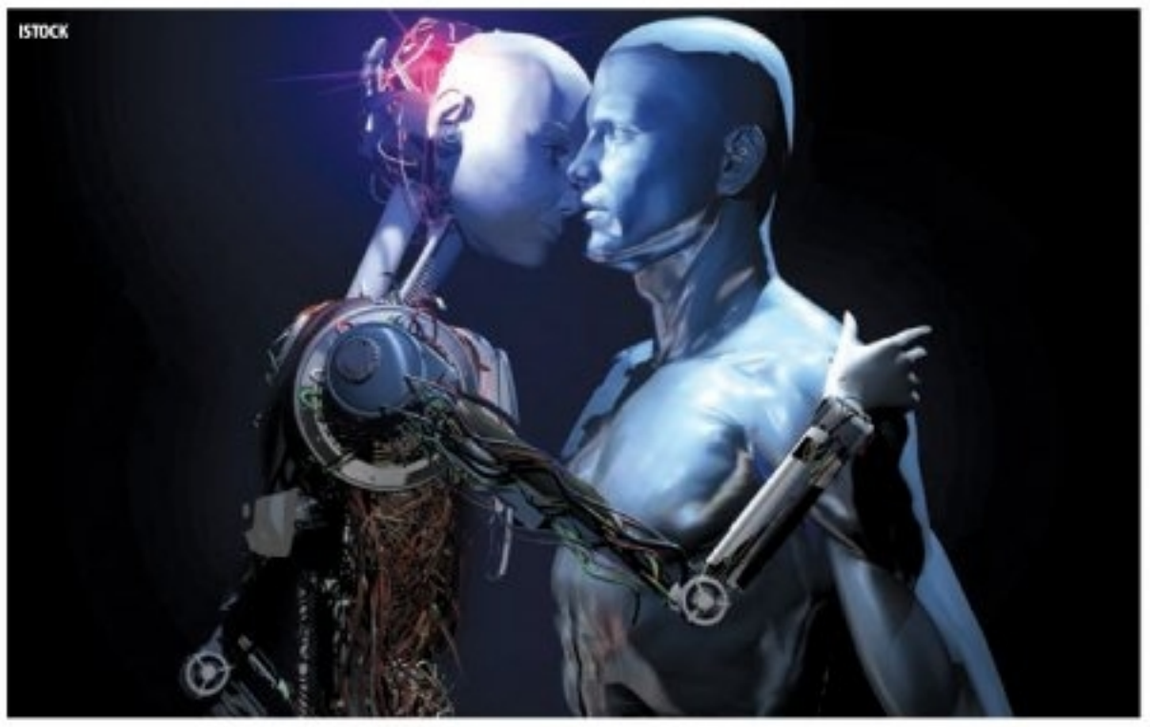
Valentine's Day of the future could be a virtual reality

"Since human loneliness is on the rise around the world, robots will fill this void."
Joanne Pransky,
self-described "world's first robotic psychiatrist"

Metro investigates what impact technology will have on the way we celebrate Feb. 14.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New technological devices are constantly trying to make life easier and better, with varying degrees of success. The future may also include new devices and apps that will not just improve relationships among people, but also create virtual relationships.

Robots, for instance, are making inroads. Care and companion cyborgs have become accepted into our lives, and people bond with them. As experts believe, in the future, we will become closer and more connected to machines.

"People will converse with apps on their smartphones and in some cases they may lose track of the fact they are talking with a machine, not a person," Martin Ford, who focuses on the impact of artificial intelligence and robotics on society, told Metro. He is author of "Rise of the Robots: Technology and the Threat of a Jobless Future."

In the near future, however, such relationships could become problematic and may involve a human withdrawing from "normal" relationships, experts say.

Another concern is the implications of sex robots, for example, and whether they further objectify women or cause people to place less value on meaningful human relationships.

"There is also some doubt over the ethics of sex robots," explained Kate Devlin, senior lecturer at the University of London.

"But I think the benefits outweigh those doubts. Sex robots could provide a way for people to be sexually active where they might not have access to socially normative relationships. Sex is a pleasurable, affirming act that enhances our well-being. If we can give people who may not be able to access the opportunity to experience it, then I think sex robots are a wonderful thing."

Virtual reality technology could have a dramatic impact on our relationships as well, with the rise in pornographic content and applications. That is often accompanied by sex toys, known as teledildonics, that allow people to take part in sexual activity with each other even when they are in different places.

That is why experts believe that soon we could have the ability to meet and interact in virtual reality environments.

For example, on Valentine's Day, you might be able to have a virtual date in a romantic place hundreds or thousands of miles away from your partner.

Maybe you'll be able to give the gift of an original work of art, created by an artificial intelligence application.

"Robots and software applications will definitely begin to stand in for other people in [a] specific area," Ford said. However, it will be a long time before people will start buying chocolates and flowers for their machines. But 30 or 50 years from now … who knows?"

DMITRY BELYAEV, METRO WORLD NEWS

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Top Italian official says Facebook must do more against hate speech

Facebook must do much more to stamp out hate speech on its site, the president of Italy's lower house of parliament said, warning that rising abuse on social media was being fueled by fake news.

Laura Boldrini, herself often the focus of sexist insults and online threats, complained to Facebook managers in November about hate speech on the social network and put forward several proposals on ways to deal with the problem.

"Two months after our meeting, they have done nothing. They have not even written to me about what I said. Good manners would have expected at least a reply," Boldrini told Reuters in a gilded, art-filled room in the parliament building.

She said she would write an open letter to

Laura Boldrini GETTY IMAGES

Facebook founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg this week reiterating her call for a more effective and timely policing of his site.

"His platform risks becoming home to dangerous predators … the company has to take responsibility for this," she said.

In a statement, Facebook said it was committed to battling hate speech and fake news, and was working closely with various institutions in Italy to deal with cyber bullying.

Facebook, Twitter, Google's YouTube and Microsoft agreed last May to an EU code of conduct to tackle online hate speech, pledging to review the majority of valid requests for removal of illegal abuse within 24 hours in Europe.

However, in a report released in December, the European Commission said only 40 percent of hate speech was being reviewed within 24 hours, with wide variations from country to country. In Italy, just 4 percent of hate posts were being removed within a day, the report said.

Boldrini, who is the third most senior official in Italy behind only the president and the president of the upper house Senate, says she is regularly deluged with abuse and in November published a selection of the offending comments. REUTERS

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Mischa Barton crashed a U-Haul into an apartment building

Poor, poor Mischa Barton.

The erstwhile star of "The O.C." has had her fair share of troubles lately.

First, there was that whole thing where she claimed she was drugged with GHB after she was hospitalized for acting super bizarrely in her backyard.

Now, TMZ is reporting that the actress literally drove her U-Haul truck into an apartment building. Okay, girl.

Barton apparently moved out of her West Hollywood apartment last Wednesday, and on Friday was driving to another building in the area when she uh, misjudged the height of the carport and crashed the U-Haul into the top of it.

So, was she just driving around her U-Haul around for two days aimlessly before moving into her new spot? We could think of a few better uses of our time — rewatching "50 Shades Darker" on an infinite loop, perhaps. That would be better. More tortuous, but better.

Good luck to Barton, and honestly? We hope she gets well soon because she is kind of a mess.

ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Um, are Amber Rose and Wiz Khalifa back together?

Amber Rose and Wiz Khalifa are probably back together.

The pair, who split in September 2015 after a little over a year of marriage, were snapped doing all kinds of kissing and canoodling at Clive Davis' pre-Grammys bash. It's like a school dance up in here!

Rose was very recently linked to Val Chmerkovskiy, who she met on the set of "Dancing with the Stars." The two dated for five months, and during that time, they were also extremely PDA-heavy. I think it's just Rose's thing, which is chill.

I suppose it's entirely possible that this is just the way Rose and Khalifa co-parent, but I'd say it's unlikely. So, congratulations, maybe?

Grammy Awards: Statement makers

RACHEL RACZKA

Kelsea Ballerini in Ines Di Santo

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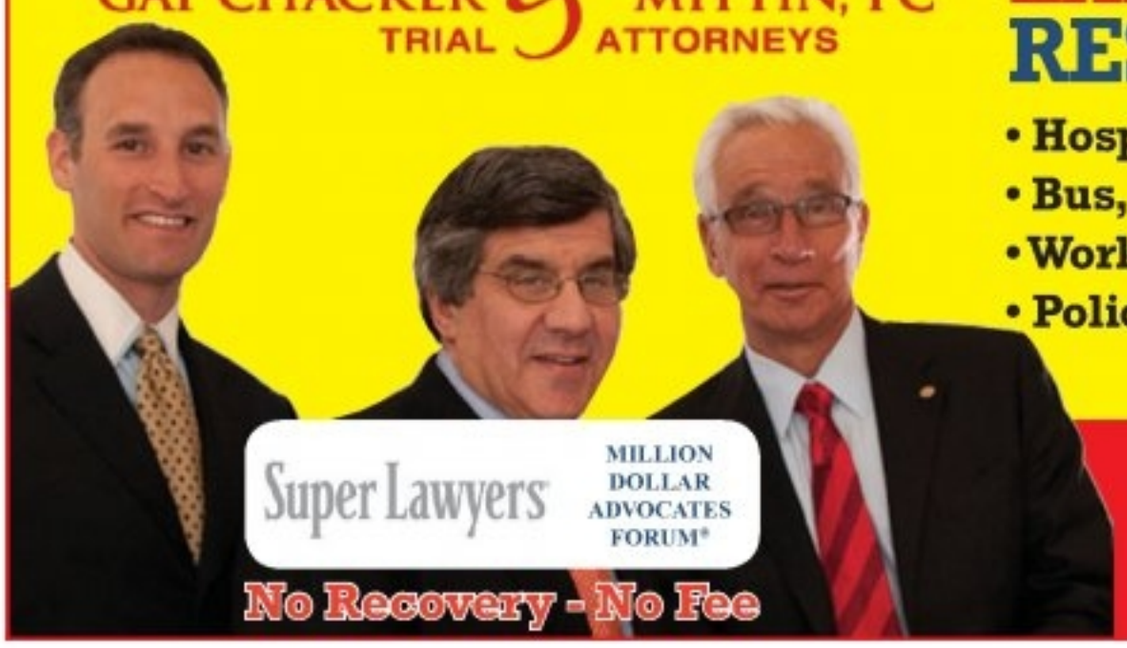

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Michael Cera is not into smartphones

The actor talks "The Lego Batman Movie," cinephilia and getting around without GPS.

MATT PRIGGE
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Michael Cera reunites with his "Arrested Development" co-star Will Arnett in "The Lego Batman," voicing Robin and the Caped Crusader. WARNER BROS. PICTURES

Voicing Robin in "The Lego Batman Movie" opens Michael Cera up to a particular line of questioning: comic-book talk. But he's not a comic-book nerd. He is, however, a movie nerd. The "Arrested Development" alum is a regular at New York City repertory houses. Lately he's been bingeing the films by Abbas Kiarostami, Mike Leigh and Rainer Werner Fassbinder. As it happens, there's a lot that Cera — who just had two films at Sundance ("Lemon" and "Person to Person") and will soon be seen in the next season of "Twin Peaks" — can talk about.

Is there a specific reason why you see so many movies? Would you want to curate your own film programs at some point?
I don't know. I don't feel like I'm a good organizer. [Laughs] I tend to enjoy other people's efforts.

So you're just seeing them because you like it.
Yeah. I don't see it as productive in any way for me. It's just enjoyment. I feel like it's a school, in a way. It's kind of an unconscious philosophical education or something. When you spend time with people who are so connected to their own outlook on the world, and especially if they have a poetic one, it's a really good feeling. It's like soul food. You learn from it in ways you don't even track.

There's so much access to movies nowadays, but I worry not enough people take advantage of that. Technology has shrunk our attention spans.

GETTY IMAGES

Rosario Dawson [who voices Batgirl] has this fountain of knowledge. She can regurgitate information in a really impressive way. It made me feel so ashamed. If I was trying to give you all the information I was trying to convey, I would probably just send you a link. [Laughs]

Tech can be so bad.
I don't have a smartphone and everyone always asks me, "How do you get around?" The old way! [Laughs] That kind of baffles people, not having a GPS in your hand at all times.

A nerd of a different kind

Are you also a comic-book person?
I'm not. That passed me by. I think I would have gotten into it if I had a friend growing up who was into it. But I just never did. It never came my way.

I don't think my brain has enough space to be crazy about comics. It's too full already with movies and music and books.
There's a blizzard of content out there. There's only so many hours in the day.

Exactly. This is why I've never seen "The Sopranos."
I know! People look at you like you just don't care about anything if you haven't seen a show they love. You see this disgust — like, "You are so much less than I thought you were." [Laughs]

I know this look all too well.
It's like you told them you don't know basic addition. Sorry! We've led different lives!

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Sam Trammell talks being a homewrecker on 'This Is Us'

Three is definitely a crowd.

JENNIFER LOGUE
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If you watched last week's episode of "This Is Us," you witnessed firsthand how Ben, played by "True Blood" actor Sam Trammell, begins to stir up trouble in Rebecca (Mandy Moore) and Jack's (Milo Ventimiglia) blissful marriage when he asks Rebecca to sing with his band on an East Coast tour. In the previews for this week, we discover that the pair used to be a couple — a shocking revelation for fans as well as Jack.

We chatted with Trammell, who is based in Los Angeles, about causing conflict between Rebecca and Jack on the show, making the move from music to acting and why "This Is Us" has been such a hit with audiences.

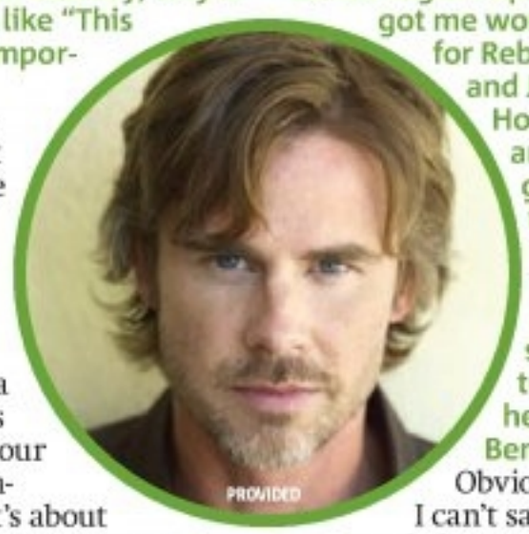
How does it feel to play the character who's getting in between TV's most adorable couple?

It's terrifying, frankly. They're so good together. I have no idea how people are going to receive my character, but that's great drama. It's kind of fun to be in the midst of their lives because they do have a precious thing. Every relationship has its ups and downs.

What do you think counts for the success of "This Is Us" so far? People really love it.

I know. I think it's a combination of fantastic writing, great actors and characters and people relating to the relationships on the show. I think the writers do such a good job of writing things that are relatable for the audience. It's just the highest quality stuff.

With everything going on in our country, why is a show like "This Is Us" important?



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It's important because it's really about your local life, in a way. It's about your relationships. It's about the people who are right in front of you. There is a lot of political unrest right now and anxiety right now. It reminds us of what's really important, which is the people that are right in front of us — our spouses, our kids. It's an escape in an ironic way, in that it brings you closer to your real home and your real life.

So last night's episode got me worried for Rebecca and Jack. How deep are we going to dive into this relationship between her and Ben?

Obviously, I can't say too much, but we go on tour and you see how it affects the relationship. Again, I can't say too much. I can say that I got to sing with Mandy Moore. It was really incredible to be singing

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From left: Ben (Sam Trammell) and Rebecca (Mandy Moore) on "This Is Us." NBC

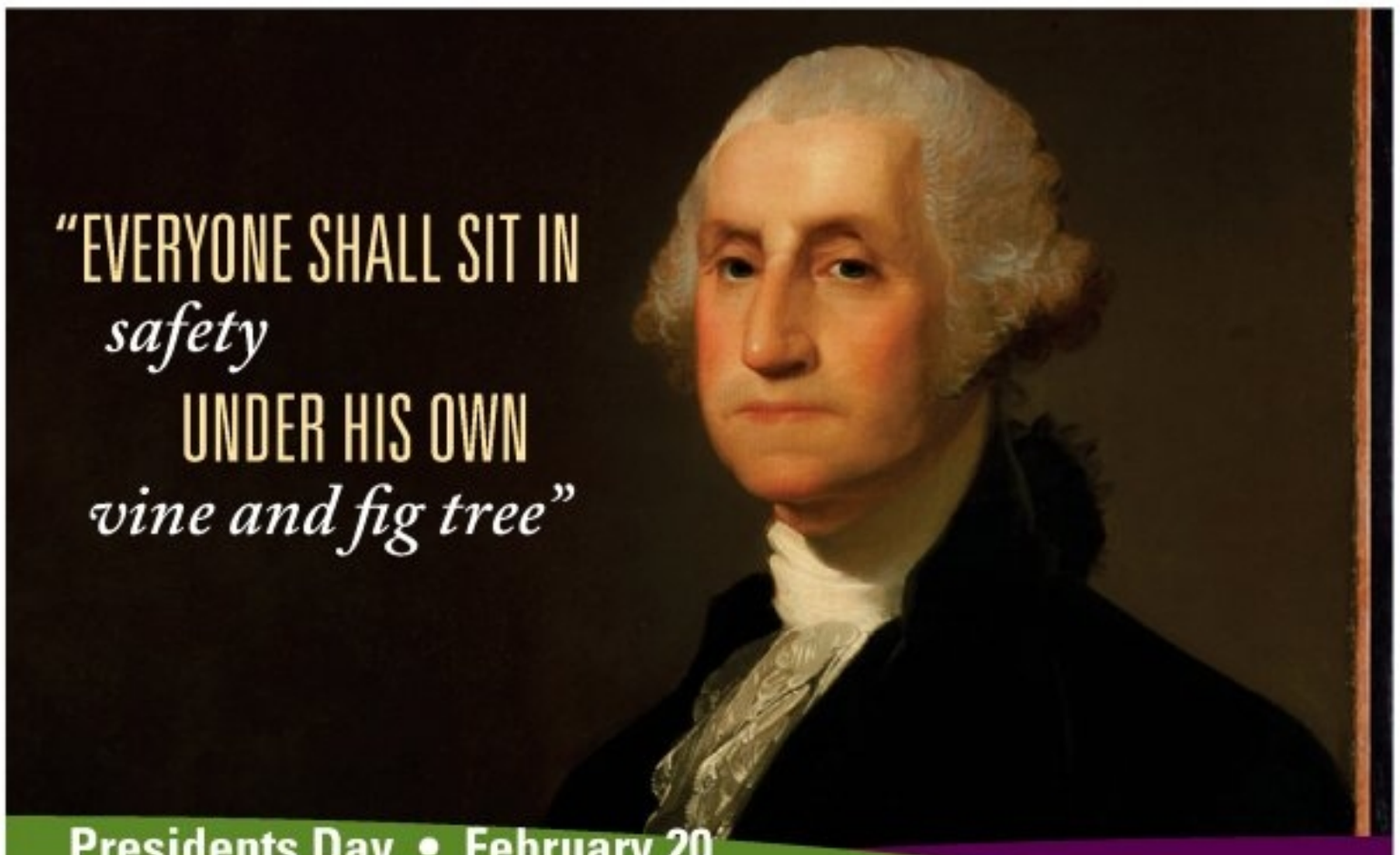
with her on stage because she's the real deal.

Segueing into that, your character's a musician. Do you have a musical background?
I was playing music long before I was an actor. I was in bands when I was a teenager, ever since I was 13 — rock cover bands. I played the cello and piano. Strummed instruments is sort of what I was drawn to.

How did you make that transition from musician to actor?
It was in college. A guy who's now a musician, who was an actor then, said, "Oh, you should audition for a play" and so I [did]. It was a real moment of "Wow, this is so exciting and amazing." Then, I was in my last semester at Brown. I just decided that I'm going to pursue that, so I moved to New York with no connections and not knowing any people. I took a bus and started from the ground up.

What do you like to do in your spare time when you're not doing a show?
One of my favorite things to do is to drive up north and go surfing in the early morning when it's still dark. You paddle out just when it gets light. It's a little cold, but that's when the waves are the best, so I like to do that. I like to play music. I have two boys who pretty much take up all the rest of my time.

Tune into this week's episode of "This Is Us" on Tuesday, Feb. 14 at 9 p.m.



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Shake-ups on the runway

Raf Simons to make American fashion great again

For his hotly-anticipated debut for Calvin Klein, Raf Simons put his spin on Americana. With a diverse lineup of models (we are, after all, a melting pot) he tipped his hat to the wild west (cowboy shirts and metal-tipped boots); Wall Street (slick suiting and exquisitely tailored coats); sports (varsity sleeves on eyebrow-raising sheer tops and blazers) and quilts (heritage prints lined some extremely cool parkas). Then came the wild card: party dresses and elegant outerwear covered in clear vinyl, that were both strange and amazing. The designer summed it up in a statement: "It is the coming together of different characters and different individuals, just like America itself."

GIOVANNI GIANNONI

3 Highlights from NYFW

INSTAGRAM/@RAGANDBONE

1. Rag & Bone's birthday bash

Marcus Wainwright skipped a traditional runway show for Rag & Bone's 15-year anniversary. Instead he held a photo exhibition showcasing the collection, followed by a party. The outerwear — especially the hip camouflage jacket on Joan Smalls and dapper plaid coat on Carmelo Anthony — is why the brand is still one of our faves.

2. Getting political

So many political statements during the Public School show, but the biggest dig at President Trump: models wearing red caps with the words "Make America New York."

3. Power dressing

The future is definitely female, according to Victoria Beckham. The designer created the perfect power wardrobe for all the #girlbosses.

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Alexander Wang goes back to black

Alexander Wang's show invite clearly stated "no after-party" but his collection begged for the club. The designer brought showgoers all the way uptown to the historic and dilapidated RKO Hamilton Theater at Broadway and 146th Street where models stomped down the stage (literally) in subversive, mostly all-black looks.

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SARA FEINSTEIN
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We all know the saying, "it's not what you know; it's who you know."

But Ivan Misner, founder and chairman of BNI, the world's largest business networking organization, has an entirely different outlook: "It's how well you know them," he says.

"Networking is about cultivating relationships with people, not just doing transactions," he explains, because at the end of the day, "people want to do business with people they know, like and trust."

Using this approach, Misner walked us through some tips for being a more effective networker.

Don't jump the gun

Forget the expression, "it never hurts to ask," says Misner. "It totally hurts to ask — if you ask too soon." Before you abruptly hand somebody your card and ask if they want to do business with you or be part of your professional network, you need them to know who you are, what you do, and that you're good at it, explains Misner. He calls it the VCP process — visibility, credibility, profitability — and you can only begin to "profit," or in other words, gain a connection or referral, after you've passed the first two stages.

Connect on a personal level

After connecting with somebody you'd like to add to your network, you should immediately set up a one-to-one meeting where you get to know each other better, says Misner. To ensure a meaningful visit, he suggests exchanging and talking through a list of GAINS: goals, accomplishments, interests, networks and skills. Overall, the technique is extremely helpful when it comes to understanding who the other person is, he says, and "the more you know about them personally, in a professional context, the better the connection you can make."

Show interest

When it comes to networking, "it's so much more important to be interested than interesting," says Misner. "When you show interest in someone else, you're much more likely to be remembered." You should be asking questions like, "What's your target market? and "What do you love about what you do?" If they do eventually open up to you, he suggests concluding by asking "What are some of the biggest challenges you have in your business?"

"That's your opportunity to act on being a great networker," he adds, by recognizing their challenges and connecting them to somebody who could help them out.

Help out

Oftentimes, people show up wanting to sell something — whether it be their brand or a product — but don't think twice about buying something or helping someone. "That's the first misstep," he explains. He likens the idea of effective networking to opening up a checking account: The bank expects you to put money in before you withdraw from it. In other words, "You can't ask somebody for something without first investing in the relationship. You have to be willing to help people in order for them to help you."

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Defense continues to pick up the slack for Flyers' lack of goal scoring

The Flyers will not abandon their current style of play.

ERIC GOLDSTEIN
@EricEsponda
sports@metro.us

Defenseman Andrew MacDonald and the rest of the Flyers defense have been outstanding of late. GETTY IMAGES

The Flyers are dedicated to playing tight defense.

Even if the offense is struggling, as it has the last couple of weeks, they expect to stick to the plan.

For proof, look no further than the past 10 games when they've scored a combined 15 goals. Until Wayne Simmonds scored in overtime in their 2-1 win over the Sharks on Saturday, they had been shutout in back-to-back games last Saturday and Tuesday — it was the first time they had been blanked two games in a row at home since 1999 — and scored just once in a loss to the Islanders on Thursday.

Despite the lack of goals, they have refused the temptation to abandon their style of play.

"I think it shows that the guys are buying in and we believe in how we play," captain Claude Giroux said following Saturday's game, which wrapped up a 2-2-1 home stand. "We just need to keep working and we have our game plan out there before each game and we follow it. That's going to give us the best chance to win every game."

While the goals have been at a premium, the Flyers are doing an excellent job keeping pucks out of their own net. They've allowed 18 regulation goals in the last 10 games and just seven in the last five.

"You kind of have to expect that collectively as a team," defenseman Andrew MacDonald said. "That's how you plan to play as a team. You have to commit to the structure."

Simmonds doesn't believe it's hard to retain that defensive approach when pucks aren't going in at the other end of the ice.

"It's not difficult. I think going down the stretch into the playoffs we have to be tight defensively," he said. "The goals haven't been coming for us but, if we hang in there and play the way we have been playing and keep getting pucks to the net and keep getting to the hard areas and commit ourselves to increasing goals, we should be fine."

The Flyers know teams that are successful at this time of the year dominate on defense. The key is to trust that strategy, especially in the face of adversity.

"A lot of the games over the last stretch have been really hard-fought games," coach Dave Hakstol said. "[Saturday] was a game we stuck with right from the drop of the puck.

"It's really hard to stand up here and say our team's playing pretty good hockey when the results aren't coming, but our team's been playing pretty good hockey. We had to win a tight, close one [against San Jose]. Maybe that's the way it's going to be [the rest of the year]."

If so, the Flyers are prepared for it.

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Phillies ready to roll in Clearwater

What to know about the Phils as pitchers at catchers report.

KYLE PHILLIPPI
@Kyle_Phillippi
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The bags and equipment were packed and loaded into the truck at the end of last week, and now they're all unpacked down in Clearwater as the Phillies pitchers and catchers report to spring training.

There are many familiar faces back in the rotation with the addition of another veteran arm. What should fans know about these guys before spring training gets underway?

Buchholz, Hellickson long-term solutions?

When the Phillies signed Jeremy Hellickson last season, there was a belief he would simply be a temporary arm used at the trade deadline to acquire a rising prospect. There were offers on the table but the Phillies opted to hold on to him and when his one-year deal expired at the end of this season, he could've walked. Instead he took the option to stay. The Phillies, seemingly using the same formula, brought in Clay Buchholz this offseason after seeing how successful Hellickson was on and off the field in his bounce back campaign. Yet, the question remains the same for Hellickson and now Buchholz: Are they here for the long haul or are they just temporary options? Considering the wealth of young arms in the organization that are knocking on the door, it seems that at least one of them will be flipped at the trade deadline. In the meantime, though, the veterans will provide much-needed talent and guidance for an otherwise youthful rotation.

The Phillies are expecting a monster year out of Aaron Nola. GETTY IMAGES

What can be expected of Nola?

A few weeks back, manager Pete Mackanin said this organization knows what they're getting out of Nola. He's got all the stuff to be an ace, it's a matter of staying healthy and putting all of his tools together. The LSU product flashed in his rookie season but took a step back last year as he was hit around a bit more. There's no reason to lose hope in Nola, who says he's 100 percent ready for all eyes to be on him this spring. Sustainability will be the key for the youngster moving forward into his third year.

Velasquez can be dominant

Through the first four months, Vince Velasquez was 8-3 and proved to be the most imposing hurler on the staff. His strong start to the season, though, was bookended with an 0-3 record over his final six starts as he went into the seventh inning in just one of those outings.

Eickhoff is underrated

His 11-13 record aside, Jerad Eickhoff was actually pretty good all around last year and chances are, fans didn't even realize it. He's not as overpowering as Velasquez nor is he as talented as Nola, but the right-hander came into his own last year. He had a respectable 3.65 ERA on the season but more impressively, surrendered just 10 earned runs over his last six starts. On a staff with a high ceiling from 1-5, Eickhoff may be the most consistent of the bunch, and that's always a good thing to have.

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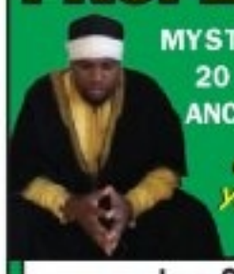

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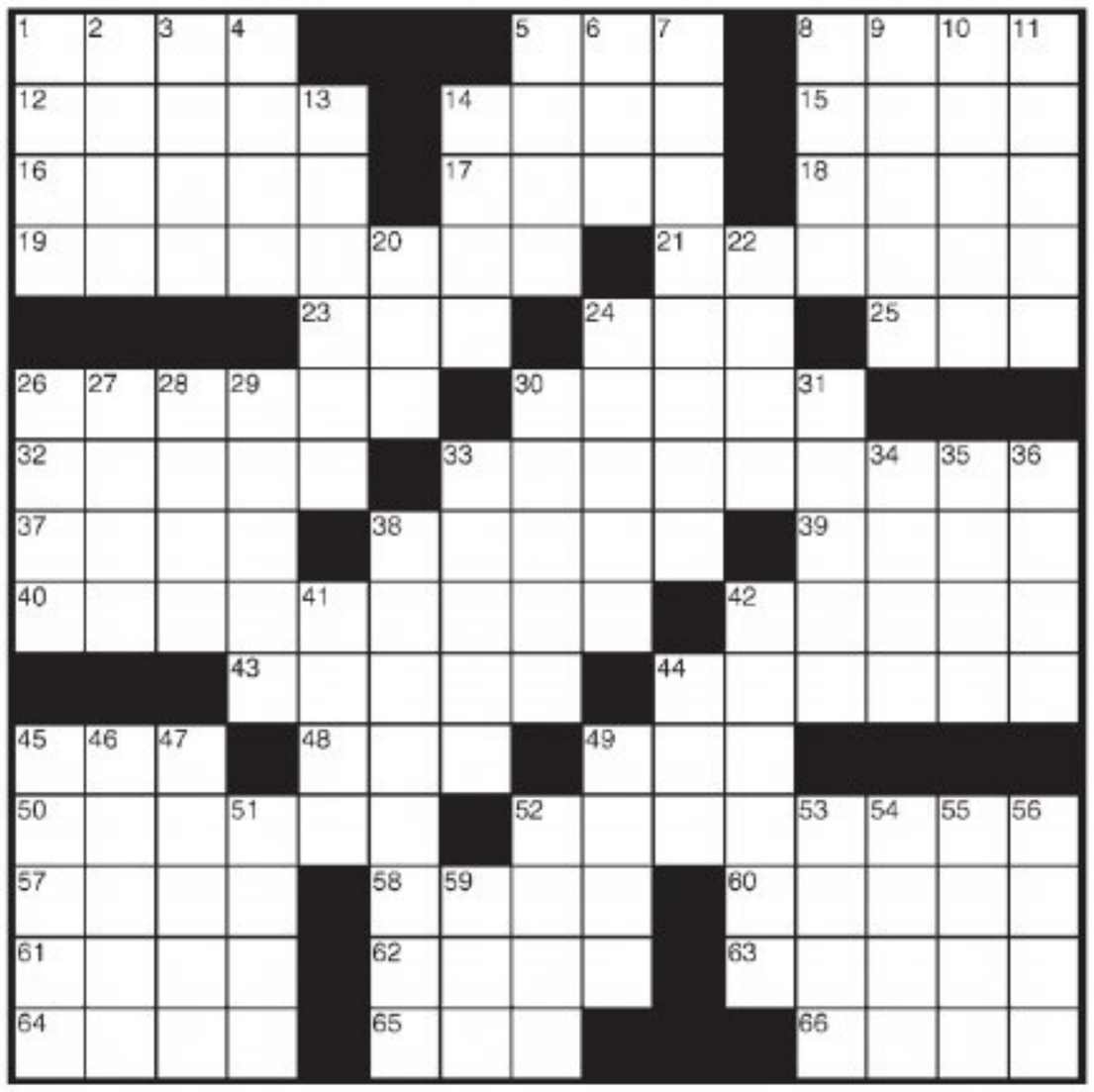
Across
1 Pull down
5 Corsage flower
8 Aberdeen kids
12 Influence
14 Mr. Dithers' wife
15 Helm position
16 Proportion
17 Earth mover
18 Runner's unit
19 Smarmy
21 Flopsy or Mopsy
23 Cooking spray
24 Private's word
25 Equal, in combos
26 Courtly dance
30 Aussie minerals
32 In unison (2 wds.)
33 Gauzy-winged insect
37 Give a high-five
38 Nest on a crag
39 Uh-oh!
40 Ice skating feat (2 wds.)
42 Overcharge
43 Proceed (2 wds.)
44 Pulp tree
45 Boar's mate
48 After taxes
49 KP workers
50 Online persona
52 Pauses in speech
57 Dice throws
58 Magnum venue
60 Boadicea's people
61 Wagner's earth goddess
62 Artifact
63 Braid
64 Galaxy unit
65 Drop bait on water
66 -- fair in ...

Down
1 Neutral color
2 Economist -- Greenspan
3 Cadet's org.
4 A night in Paris
5 Dairy bellows
6 Suffix for forfeit
7 "The -- of Figaro"
8 Gyro filler
9 Perpetrator's need
10 Lox locales
11 Deal with (2 wds.)
13 Hairpiece
14 Sidekick
20 Mare's morsel
22 A Guthrie
24 "The Rains in --"
26 Not fem.
27 Cuba, to Castro
28 -- Chomsky
29 Dismantle a tent
30 Sen. Hatch of Utah
31 Eavesdrop
33 Bus stop
34 Malodorous
35 Links org.
36 River in Belgium
38 Kind of belt
41 Capp's hyena
42 Loose talk
44 Diner staple
45 Gluts
46 In plain view
47 "A Fish Called --"
49 It had three parts
51 Movie mogul
52 Karate blow
53 Pac-10 team
54 Not bogus
55 Indigo plant
56 Roosts
59 Nabokov heroine



metro.us/sudoku

easy

	9			4		7		
8		1						6
		6	5	3	8			1
	3			8			7	
5								3
	1			5			2	
2			3	9	4	8		
1						5		4
		3		7			6	

hard

	2		7					
5	8			6	1		4	9
			5	2		8		
7						5		
		5	1		2	3		
		3						8
		8		4	7			
9	5		6	8			2	1
					5		8	

metro.us/horoscopes

Aries Working hard and building strong relationships with your peers will promote popularity and a stellar reputation. Use your talent to engage in something you enjoy.

Taurus Business deals and prospects will highlight your day. Networking or getting more involved in groups that interest you will be important when it comes to progress.

Gemini Your best financial gains will come through hard work, finding solutions to existing problems and exploring new ways to press forward with your responsibilities.

Cancer You may not be eager to travel, but your curiosity will get the better of you. Indulge in community and cultural events to become aware of new possibilities.

Leo Check out your career options. An opportunity will tempt you to make a move. Revamp your résumé, update your skills and set sail for a chance to live your dream.

Virgo Keep close tabs on your investments, personal belongings and responsibilities if you want to avoid criticism and an unnecessary loss. Protect against injury.

Libra Don't reveal too much about what you are up to. Use your intelligence and ability to persuade others to trust you in order to avoid interference.

Scorpio Focus on creativity and your desire to expand an interest. Don't invest too much cash until you are sure you want to follow through with your plans.

Sagittarius Don't divulge personal secrets to your peers. Someone will take advantage of you emotionally or try to manipulate you into doing something you shouldn't.

Capricorn Travel and educational pursuits are highlighted. The rewards you receive due to the research and information you gather will lead to praise.

Aquarius Change will bring positive results. Buckle down and get things done that will give you the freedom you need to live your dream. Make romance a priority.

Pisces Get past emotional confusion by asking pertinent questions, gathering the facts and being honest regarding your opinions and motives. EUGENIA LAST

Yesterday's answers

S	I	P	■	K	O	A	L	A	■	■	M	A	A	M
A	N	A	■	A	R	D	O	R	■	W	I	N	C	E
B	A	C	K	T	R	A	C	K	■	I	N	T	E	L
E	N	T	R	Y	■	■	H	I	L	L	I	E	S	T
R	E	S	I	D	E	D	■	N	E	D	S	■	■	■
■	■	■	S	I	X	E	S	■	G	E	T	S	I	T
C	A	W	■	D	I	T	T	O	■	R	E	H	A	B
O	L	A	F	■	T	E	A	L	S	■	R	I	G	S
R	A	D	A	R	■	R	I	D	E	S	■	P	O	P
N	I	E	C	E	S	■	R	I	A	T	A	■	■	■
■	■	■	I	C	E	S	■	E	L	E	M	E	N	T
C	A	L	L	O	W	A	Y	■	■	R	O	T	O	R
A	G	A	I	N	■	H	O	R	S	E	S	H	O	E
R	U	N	T	S	■	I	D	A	H	O	■	E	S	A
L	A	D	Y	■	■	B	A	N	E	S	■	L	E	T

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